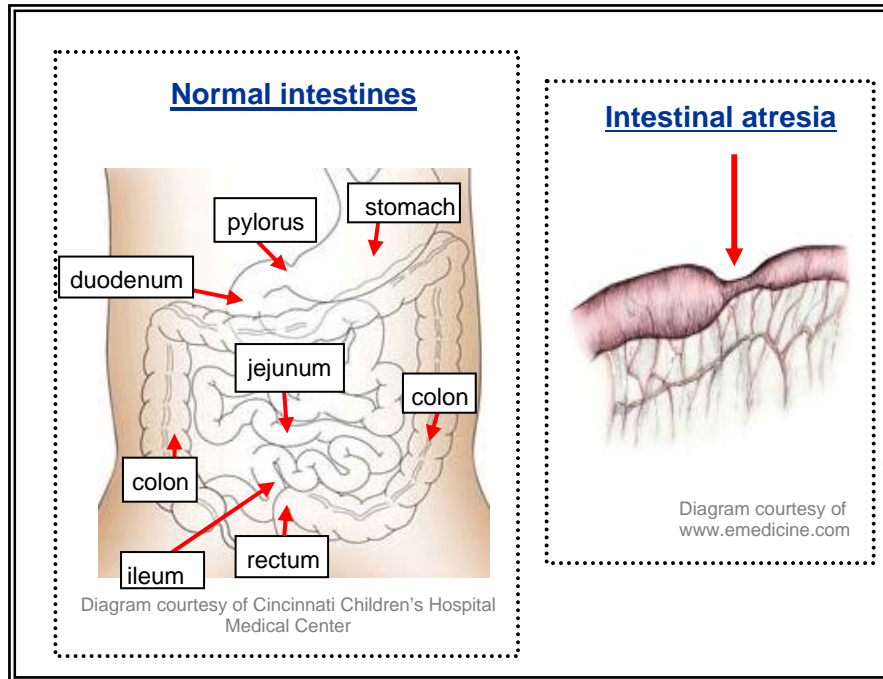


Intestinal Atresia

What is intestinal atresia?

Intestinal atresia is a **congenital** (present at birth) birth defect that develops when part of the intestines are missing or blocked. The **atresia** (blockage) most often occurs along the **small intestine** (divided into the **duodenum**, **jejunum**, and **ileum**); however, some babies have atresia of the **large intestine** (also called the **colon**). Depending on where the blockage occurs, intestinal atresia may be given a more specific name (for example, blockage in the duodenum would be called “duodenal atresia”).



Babies with atresia anywhere along the intestines often develop an enlarged **abdomen**, have constipation (failure to pass stools), and may vomit after feeding. Some babies with intestinal atresia are **premature** (born early). Approximately 50% of babies with duodenal atresia have additional birth defects, including **cardiac** (heart) **defects** or abnormalities of the **genitourinary system** (including the genitals, bladder, and kidneys). Approximately 30 – 40% of babies with duodenal atresia have **Down syndrome** (also called trisomy 21). If your baby has duodenal atresia, his or her doctor(s) will perform a thorough examination in order to identify any other birth defects which may be present.

What causes intestinal atresia?

Intestinal atresia may occur for several reasons, including **rotation** (turning) of the intestines during development or an **abdominal wall defect** (opening in the abdomen that results in the intestines being exposed outside the body). These abnormalities lead to a **decreased blood supply** to the intestines, which then causes the atresia or **stenosis** (narrowing). Approximately 1 out of every 1,500 babies are born with intestinal atresia or stenosis.

How is intestinal atresia treated?

Intestinal atresia can be surgically corrected. The affected portion of the intestine will be removed, and the ends of the intestines connected. Your child's doctor(s) will discuss appropriate treatment options with you.

For more information

Children's Hospital of Boston - <http://www.childrenshospital.org/az/Site1180/mainpageS1180P0.html>

Cincinnati Children's Hospital - <http://www.cincinnatichildrens.org/health/info/abdomen/diagnose/obstructions.htm>

Source: Emedicine.com - <http://www.emedicine.com/ped/topic3043.htm>